

FASD and the Legal Services Workgroup - MINUTES
Alaska FASD Partnership
March 8, 2011

Present: *Stephanie Johnson (Nome); Gloria Hooper (Barrow); Laura & Larry Rorem, Jeri Museth (Juneau), Kate Sumey (Anchorage); Teri Tibbett (Juneau)*

I. Changing statute related to mitigating factor for FASD

Gloria Hooper – Described mitigating factors related to sentencing for felonies. The legislature determines what the standards should be, either “aggravating factors” (reasons why to have increased penalty), or “mitigating factors” (not so serious reasons) to allow the court to take into consideration the mitigating factor that the person has suffered from FASD and does not have the ability to fully understand their crime – gives the judge more discretion on sentencing.

II. Improve Screening in DOC and DJJ

Stephanie – DeeDee reported that DOC has included questions about FASD in their intake screening process. Stephanie met with the superintendent of Anvil Mountain in Nome and they have added a couple of questions about FASD into screening intake process – which is good news for DOC. Next step is to work on the process for follow-up when someone screens positive. DJJ mental health clinicians and director are looking at evidence-based screening tools that screen for traumatic events such as domestic violence, abuse, neglect, etc. Stephanie has and will continue to talk with DJJ director, Barb Henjum, to make sure the screening tools include screening for traumatic brain injury and FASD.

Larry – will they need an FASD diagnosis?

Stephanie – No, they can use “Other Health Impaired” (like they use for ADHD) which allows them to work with the youth and develop a behavior management plan.

Gloria – Barrow supports using the term “suspected FASD.”

Teri – Suggested reviewing the “Youth Probation Officer’s Guide to FASD Screening and Referral” to share with Director Henjum. Go to:

http://www.asantecentre.org/Library/docs/Youth_ProbationOfficersGuideToFASDScreeningandReferralPrinter-FriendlyFormat.pdf

Telemedicine – This is being discussed in the Diagnosis workgroup. It was also a topic covered at the 4th International Conference on FASD in Vancouver. Read Diagnosis workgroup minutes for details.

III. Training for DOC/DJJ staff

Stephanie – A consultant came to Alaska to look at programs related to mental health program delivery in juvenile justice and make recommendations to OJJDP (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention). The consultant is producing a report on improving services for youth with mental health needs. Stephanie said they talked a lot about FASD and he will likely include recommendations related to improving FASD training for staff and services for youth with an FASD. One of his suggestions is to set up a mental health unit at McLaughlin and possibly Fairbanks to house youth with specific mental health needs. He said housing youth with serious mental health needs along with youth who have serious

criminal behaviors can is not recommended as youth with conduct disorder often take advantage of vulnerable youth – and youth with FASD are vulnerable.

Laura – Her experience is youth with FASD in the juvenile justice system are put in with seriously bad youth and end up learning seriously bad behaviors – because of a tendency of youth with FASD to be “followers.”

Stephanie – Will have a mid-April meeting with the DJJ Statewide Training Committee. She will discuss improving training efforts in the area of FASD and making the FASD training mandatory for all staff that interacts directly with youth.

Teri explained the efforts of the Trust Training Cooperative, who is working in collaboration with UAA, Dept. of Health and Social Services, and Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (Trust) and others to compile a “matrix” of trainings across Alaska that serve providers and others who serve Trust beneficiaries (people with mental illness, substance abuse, developmental disabilities, brain injury, Alzheimer’s and related dementia). They are researching and gathering different trainings related to FASD and are open to hearing about more. They are also working with the Alaska Peer Support Consortium to develop standards for training for Peer Support Specialists. Go to: www.ttclms.org.

IV. Legislative Update

Teri - The upcoming “FASD and the Education System” presentation to the Alaska State Senate will happen on Wed. March 16. Participants include Partnership steering committee members Cindy Anderson from the Anchorage School District, Monica Charles Leinberger from Lower Kuskokwim School District, Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus and her daughter Ivory from Kiana, Mindy Cason, a UAA student who experiences FASD, and Mary and Terrill Andrews from Bethel who are a birth mom and son with FASD. These participants will also meet with the Commissioner of Education & Early Development, as well as meet one-on-one with legislators and share with them their knowledge and personal experience with the education system as it related to FASD.

Larry – Suggested bringing adults with FASD to the legislature to discuss what has worked for them when they were in the school system. Noted how isolated parents and families are – people don’t want to hear about the pain – one more isolating factor in an already isolated life.